

From A New Perspective

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Summary: Sonic is quick as the wind and addicted to adventure-but he is majorly lacking in the patience department. But when he is enlisted by G.U.N to take down a new threat to Mobius, he meets a young, peach hedgehog who changes his worldview.

1. Prologue

Prologue

Echo's POV

It was a sunny, spring day. I could see cherry blossoms outside my window, and hear birds singing songs on their branches_. I hugged Magnolia-the fuchsia stuffed iguana that constitutes my first Christmas present. The softness of her velvet scales comforts me as I stared out the window, watching the human couple walk into the building.

They had hidden me away again. The nun in charge of taking care of me, Sister Annette, tried to comfort me, telling me that they simply didn't think me a good fit for the family. I can't fault Sister Annette-she has been kind to me during my stay here-but I know better. Many of the kids don't end up being a good fit for the other families that come here, yet I'm the only one who the headmistress wants locked away when the families come to visit. And all because of a word on a piece of paper somewhere in her office.

Autism. I still don't quite know what it means. All I know is that it's the reason I enjoy meticulous order, why I can't stand the clamour and congestion of the main play area, why I always trip over my feet when we play soccer, and why I always hum, hands clapped over my ears, and rock back and forth to calm down. It's why I can hear the flower petals brushing up against each other in the wind-even though I'm behind glass-and why my cells explode in pain every time I am hugged or someone holds my hand too tight. It's why I've never

looked a single nun or kid in the eye whenever I talk to them, and why I prefer not to. More importantly, it's why, when I first arrived here, I could not communicate my own needs-I could only repeat the words of the other nuns and kids around me. I still don't remember what my parents named me-although I remember having parents, once-but I do remember the name the other kids and even some of the nuns started to call me: Echo. Echo I was named, and Echo I became.

I was interrupted from my reflective reverie by the sound of my stomach growling like a defensive puppy, reminding me that on a normal day, 12:30 meant lunchtime. Knowing the other nuns would be busy with the kids who would GET to be seen, I decided to go down to the kitchen and make myself a peanut butter and honey sandwich. I didn't figure it would be that hard-I had seen the nuns do it on multiple occasions, and it seemed like an easy task. Two slices on the counter, south side up, peanut butter on one, honey on the other, place the peanut butter on top and cut it in half. I was running through this sequence over in my head when I heard a sharp voice call my name: "ECHO!"

_Uh oh, _I thought to myself as the Headmistress approached me, her ice blue eyes aflame with anger. "What do you think you're doing outside of your room?" She said in her shrill voice-the voice that she knew made my ears feel like they were going to break. From across the room, Sister Annette looked at me, her chocolate eyes filled with both fear and sympathy. Poor Sister Annette.

I tried to keep myself from breaking down in front of the headmistress. Tears wouldn't get me anywhere. "12:30 is lunchtime." I said calmly, correcting my posture so that she could hear me. "Tuesdays I have a peanut butter and honey sandwich."

Bewilderment filled her eyes for a moment, replaced by understanding mixed with annoyance. She then beckoned for Sister Annette. "Go make Echo her sandwich while I escort her back to her room." She said, in a tone that almost seemed filled with contempt. Why, I did not know. She then looked down at me before adding, in that same tone, "And what do you say to Sister Annette for making you your sandwich?"

I then bent myself down in the best curtsey I could muster. "Thank you, Sister Annette." I added, in that sickly sweet tone my ears had hated, but my mouth and brain had learned to master. The Headmistress simply sniffed. "Quite right." She almost snarled. "Now come with me." She was just about to grab me by the hand-which was always hurtful-when a soft, feminine voice asked, in the kindest tone I had heard all day "And who are you, dearest?"

The headmistress turned around, her feathered face all but drained of colour, the exact same time I did. It was the exact same couple that had droven in earlier today, only now, I was seeing them up close. The mom had wonderous green eyes and honey brown hair that ended at her shoulders, and she was wearing an egg shell blue dress bedecked with flowers. It was the father, however, that fascinated me: he had short brown hair, steel gray eyes, and the bushiest moustache I had ever seen. He wore a navy blue suit bedecked with pins, underneath which was a powder blue shirt and a black tie.

I straightened myself up. "Everyone calls me Echo." I said, relishing their attention. "I like pink and green and iguanas!"

The headmistress glared at me, then faced the parents. "Echo here was dropped here by her parents. Quite frankly, I can't say I blame them; she's quite a handful, and we can't have her around the other kids because she'll-"

"We'll take her!" The father boomed. The headmistress' jaw dropped to the floor-which I would've laughed at if I wasn't busy covering my ears. "S-sir", she stammered, "with all due respect, she is loud, disrespectful, and very picky, not to mention the fact that she's-"

"Perfect!" The father finished. "She's just the girl we'd been looking for." The mother then bent down and took my hands-gently enough that it didn't hurt. "What do you say, Echo?" The mother said, her voice soft as cherry blossom petals. "You wanna be a part of our family?"

I could hear several of the children raise their voice in protest "What? HER?" "No fair!" "Why does the retard get to go and we don't?" I didn't care; I was going to have a home, a family, a mom and dad! I wanted to scream in happiness, but remembered my manners. "Yes please."

It had been nearly a month since the Charters adopted me. Since then, I had learned how to clean my room, make my bed, and wash myself. I had even learned how to make my own sandwich! Life there was delightful... But there was still one problem: they had a next door neighbour who played the drums, and the noise absolutely HURT.

Tonight was one such night. "MAKE IT STOP!" I screamed, tears running down my face. Ava-my mother-had given me Magnolia to calm me down, and I was clinging onto her for dear life while I curled into a ball on my bed. All of a sudden, the oppressive percussion came to a halt, followed by yelling on both sides. I could actually hear what they were saying-insults along with several words I wasn't allowed to say-before my father Jonathan stormed out of the house next door and returned to my room. "I'll stay with her." My father whispered before kissing my mother on the cheek. My mother then left the room, closing the door shut behind her, before my father turned to me.

"Have you always heard things like this?" My father asked. I didn't quite know what he meant by that question, so I replied the best way I could: "I hear everything."

My father seemed stunned, and I was worried he was going to get mad at me like the headmistress did. Instead, however, he asked me something else: "What can you hear right now?"

I then got up on my knees, wiped the tears from my face, and concentrated as best I could, pricking my ears as I did so. Then I replied: "I can hear mom getting into bed, and someone across the street is taking out their trash. I hear our neighbour grumbling and swearing, and there's a kid next door to him playing on the computer." For a moment, my father stood very quietly, and his face was unreadable. He then stood up. "Come with me, Echo." He said, extending his hand. "I want to show you something." I took it and followed him downstairs.

"This is everything I have accomplished in my time as a commander."

He said, as I looked at picture upon picture of him in combat, or of him smiling, with a group of men, in front of a huge plane. My lilac eyes were wide with disbelief. This is what Dad did? No wonder he was away so often.

He then turned to me. "Echo," he began, "I had a feeling about you the moment I met you; a feeling that you could become something great. You have an incredible mind, the type of mind needed in my line of work. Others may see that mind-and your hearing-as weaknesses, but I see them as gifts that can be turned into strengths with proper guidance and faith." His eyes were boring down at me, and for the first time, I felt a raw energy surge within me. "Are you ready to begin?"

I looked straight up at him, for perhaps the first time in my life. Suddenly autism didn't seem like a roadblock anymore. "Yes sir."

2. Chapter 1

Chapter 1: The Coming Storm

14 Years Later

Echo's POV

I stayed absolutely still, not moving a single muscle. My eyes stayed glued to the horizon before me, my ears pricked for any sound, my back stiff against the cold metal wall of the abandoned warehouse. Bright lights, bright lights everywhere. One wrongly timed move, and they'll find you.

It's been nearly 14 years since I first started training with my adoptive father, Commander Jonathan Charter, and in that time, I've learned more than any schoolteacher could ever teach me. I learned how to land after a jump so that even I couldn't hear my footfall (toes first, then the ball of my foot, then the arch, then the heel), how to use my previous habit of echoing those around me to mimic the voice of an enemy (either to infiltrate their base or lure their comrades to mine), and how to visualize the outcome of a plan in order to properly strategize. Most importantly, I learned how to concentrate my hearing to a specific sound, in order to keep others from overwhelming me. This was precisely what I was doing now-I turned my head left, then right, then tilted it side to side, looking for one voice in particular: That of Darion Ivers.

Ivers, or "Sweet Cakes" as he is known amongst his mob, was the head of a large trafficking operation in Station Square. This asshole would bring vulnerable women and girls from any corner of the world, promising a life of wealth and success, and turn them into prostitutes for perverted old men. His nickname of "Sweet Cakes" came from his habit of sweet talking not only the victims, but other mobs in the city, as opposed to shooting them up should they get too close. Not that he didn't have his vicious streak-he's robbed, raped, and even killed many of the women who have tried to escape. The very thought of the whole thing made me sick in a way that fueled my desire to end his operation, once and for all. That's another thing I've learned from my father: When living beings are involved in an operation, you get one shot at the job-and you have to do it right.

Fortunately, this is where my strategizing skills and sequential pattern of thinking come in handy-I follow each step properly, and the operation is done quick and clean, the bad guys are arrested, and very few people get hurt. In fact, the only agent who has died on a mission I was on was my father himself-while we were chasing a war criminal in Spagonia, he had thrown a grenade launcher at me, but my father ended up taking the heat (no pun intended). Because of my reputation for precision amongst the ranks of G.U.N, I had been given a nickname amongst some of the younger agents: Calculator.

My reverie was interrupted by the sound of Sweet Cakes' voice. At last! I pricked my ears closely, moving them forward to back the way Shadow had taught me. I almost forgot-Shadow and Rouge were my partners on quite a few missions. Shadow's a hedgehog much like myself, only with black spines streaked with red (four of which seemed to stick up at the ends) as opposed to my peach ones, blood red eyes, and... rocket shoes. Why he had them I did not know. As for Rouge, she's a bat with white fur, purple wings, and blue eyes who always seems to wear full makeup, a jumpsuit, and heels into every combat mission. That confused me more than Shadow's rocket shoes-outside of combat, I could see the appeal of the jumpsuit, since it flattered her figure well enough to show her... well... assets, but in combat, it left her back completely exposed to attackers (plus, I don't know how on Mobius she gets it to stay up). Then again, she could use her wings to fly away or to shield her should things go south, so what did I know?

It didn't take long for me to discern where Sweet Cakes' voice was coming from-a room in the northwest quadron of the upper warehouse. I looked towards Shadow and Rouge, who were waiting near the wall opposite mine, and gave them a quick tilt of my head, indicating that I had found our guy. Within moments, the two went into the building, while I followed them in. We then stopped for a moment, Shadow and Rouge waiting patiently while I activated the microscopic suckers on my gloves and boots. Within moments, I scaled the wall and ceiling with the fluidity of a gecko, and started moving towards the direction of the sound, Shadow and Rouge following close behind.

Shadow's POV

I watched with a sense of pride as Echo moved fluidly towards Sweet Cakes' location-her ears guiding her, no doubt. I had never had the best impression of G.U.N-even as one of their agents-but when I first met Echo, I was struck at first by her kindness towards me and acknowledgement of my status as an agent, as well as how quickly she learned what I taught her. I was soon equally impressed by how quickly she could switch personalities-within G.U.N headquarters, she was modest, almost shy; once she became involved in a mission, however, her concentration was sharp and apparent, and her courage extraordinary. Then her father was killed in action, and everyone expected her to resign-myself included-and would've understood completely if she did. Instead, she surprised us all by bouncing back and continuing her work the same as she had before-focused and committed. She later told me: "I am in G.U.N as an agent because my father and mother believed in me when many did not. For me, the best way to honour his memory would be to continue to use my gifts for the good of others." Since then, she has earned my respect in every way possible, and I have insisted that she joins me and Rouge on every mission we've been assigned to. The first time I practically begged

_the Commander to let her join me-and I don't beg for
anything.

"Something on your mind, Shadow?" I hear Rouge's voice from behind me, and I turn my head, giving her a look saying "Mission now, chitchat later". I was never the most talkative hedgehog during missions-except to report my status to headquarters-but the Commander has stressed, time and time again, that silence during Echo's missions was _essential_, _since it was important for her to concentrate on finding her guy. Once that was done and he was captured, we could talk all we wanted, but until then, a vow of silence was enforced. The fact that Rouge shirked this vow-quite often, in fact-irked me to no end. Had she no respect for her fellow agent?

Rouge's talking, however, didn't seem to bother Echo, because within a moment, she had found the stairway leading up to what I could only assume was Sweet Cakes' office and had scaled the wall with impressive speed. Within moments, Rouge and I were at the stairway, waiting for our cue.

Echo's POV

"Aight, listen up boys." Sweet Cakes said, his drawl making his voice have the rhythm and frequency of a mosquito's hum. I pressed myself tight against the wall, grateful for the low lighting as he continued. "We'll have to expand our operations in preparation of the Multicultural Festival tomorrow. Sly, Peanuts, you target the Spagonian and Chun-nanian districts in the city, while Buttercup and Triggerfinger go for the Soleannan and Apotan districts. Me and Doberman will go for the Mazurian and Holoskan districts, while Silence and The Hulk target the Shamarian and Adabatian districts." I saw this as my cue and turned my head.

"Actually," I countered, causing the men in the room to turn their heads in alarm, "given the price you tend to charge for your escorts, which tends to be around 18 to 25,000 Mobiums, you would be better off concentrating your business into the Soleannan, Apotan, Spagonian, and Holoskan districts, as well as in Station Square's West Side, since those are the districts where people with money to burn can be found." I then deactivated the suckers and landed on the ground (_toe, ball, arch, heel_) before walking toward them. "And in any case, you boys might wanna find a new hobby." I continued, before pulling my face into a serious grimace that seemed to genuinely frighten them. "We're shutting you down."

Right on cue, Shadow and Rouge appeared at the top of the stairs, pinning Sweet Cakes and Sly to the ground, while I dodged a bullet from Peanuts' gun and knocked him out cold. We then placed handcuffs on our respective bad guys before I walked towards Sweet Cakes and hoisted him up. "Darion Ivers," I began, "you are under arrest by Echo Charter, agent of the Guardian Units of Nations, for human trafficking, murder, theft, fraud, and sexual assault. You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law. You have a right to speak to an attorney, and to have an attorney present during any questioning. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you at government expense. Do you understand your rights as they are read to you now?" Sweet Cakes then turned his head towards me. "Sweetheart, let's talk about this..."

Not on my watch. I thought to myself before leaping up and punching him in the face. "I'll take that as a no."

"You did WHAT?" Gabriel Javier asked, as we sat around a table at a G.U.N hosted banquet. Shadow and Rouge were telling him-and everyone else-how I had punched Sweet Cakes straight in the face. Rouge seemed to be having the most fun with it, and by the time she had gotten to Gabriel, tears were streaming down her face.

"You should've seen Sly and Peanuts' faces." She hooted through hysterical laughter. "Priceless! Absolutely PRICELESS!" She then fell off her chair, her body shaking, sounding more like a hyena than a bat in that moment. Shadow, for his part, simply rolled his eyes and picked at his dinner, although I could see a slight smile on his face. Whether it was in pride or laughter, I could not tell.

"Well, I for one, am proud of Echo's courage in taking this mission." My adoptive mother, Ava, replied in a voice that bespoke no nonsense. She then turned towards me, her green eyes filled with warmth. "And I know her father would be as well."

"Thank you mother." I replied, basking in the glow of my mother's pride. The clanging of the Commander's fork against his glass triggered silence throughout the hall, followed by the rest of us standing up while Rouge regained her composure. "Ladies and gentlemen," the Commander began, "I have called you all here for reasons I'm sure you have already guessed." He then turned towards me, and I felt myself stand at attention. "As you may know, Echo Charter became an agent of G.U.N time after being trained by her late adoptive father, Jonathan Charter. Her circumstances, which many believed would hinder her, were shown to work time and time again in her-and our-favour, and Echo herself has proven to be an individual of extreme courage and dedication. Therefore, it is my both my honour and pleasure to promote Echo from Specialist to Corporal, and to announce that she will be training other soldiers with disabilities and special needs-effective immediately!" This earned thunderous applause from my fellow agents as the Commander beckoned me forward. I walked towards the podium, half in a daze, before the Commander pinned the corporal stripes onto the sleeve of my body suit. "Congratualtions, Echo." The Commander told me. "You've earned this as much as anyone."

I was just about to thank him when loud static replaced the G.U.N logo on the screen above. A collective gasp was heard from the hall, followed by silence as eyes were glued to the screen. A man with blond hair and blue eyes then appeared on the screen.

"Greetings, G.U.N." he began. "If you are watching this video, it means that I have finally figured out how to hack your system so that you can see and hear me, so, thank you all for your patience, it is a lot harder than it looks." I heard a nervous chuckle from Quiana, a female agent in our Intelligence sector, before he continued. "Now, onto the reason I hacked your system in the first place: My name is Kaiser Fade, and I run an organization known as the Brotherhood for the Purity of Mobius, or BPM. Our mission is to educate the citizens of Mobius on the Values of Purity, which are, in the following order: Loyalty, Chastity, Honesty, Respect, and Bravery."

"As you can imagine, however," he continued, his voice going cold,

"there are various obstacles we have to conquer in order to achieve our goal, and one such obstacle is the presence of the mentally impaired-such as your agent, Echo Charter." He then turned his beady eyes onto me. "Echo is able to hear the way she can and go about her missions with her trademark precision because she has autism, a developmental disorder often diagnosed in early childhood. Regardless of how intelligent or friendly they may seem, individuals with developmental disabilities such as autism have a mental age equivalent to that of a five year old, meaning they will believe anyone and anything they hear. They know no love, no fear, and no compassion, and as a result, individuals with these disabilities must be eradicated by any and all BPM members upon sighting, in order to better preserve the purity of our world. The fact that you have such an individual among your ranks, let alone in a position of power, makes you and the United Federation targets. However, let it not be said that I have no mercy; I will give you 30 days to either discharge Corporal Echo Charter from your ranks or euthanize her on the spot. If you refuse... well... let me show you what will happen." He then turned the camera towards a panicked young girl and her parents chained to a cement wall, as well as a young boy whom I could only assume was her younger brother. Fear struck me almost immediately when I realized the boy was autistic, recognizing almost immediately his discomfort at the metal around his wrists and ankles.

Kaiser then signaled someone off camera, and the sound of a shotgun was heard, followed by the sight of bullets going through the boy's heart, stomach, and throat amid screaming and crying from the heartbroken family. I had seen plenty of horrible things in my time as an agent, but this traumatized me more than any of them. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see my mom's face contort in sheer horror, while anger filled Shadow's eyes and Rouge looked like she was gonna be sick. He then turned the camera back towards his face. "This family," he revealed, "had the opportunity to turn their son in to our headquarters, where we would've euthanized him quick and painlessly away from anyone else. Because they refused, however, they must now watch the blood drip from him until his body turns cold. Take this as a warning: Those who defy us, refuse our offers for help... will suffer a fate worse than death." The last thing we heard before the screen returned to static was another gun shot.

I could feel myself shaking with a mixture of fury and terror. Who in their right minds would do such a thing? To someone that vulnerable, no less? Before I could process what had happened, the Commander started barking orders. "Intelligence! Trace any and all available details on Kaiser Fade and BPM. Try to trace the signal from that broadcast so that we can find this bastard!" He then turned to me. "Echo," he said, his voice returning to normal, "we need you to find this guy and his organization. You must know, however, that this won't be like any of your previous missions; many lives are at stake here, and you may have to kill this man in order to protect them. Are you up for it?"

I smiled. It was comforting to know the Commander still believed I could take this mission. "I won't let you down sir." I replied. The Commander smiled. "Excellent." He said. "Go to Damien in Weapons to receive the gadgets you will be needing, then wait for further information from Intelligence." Before I left, I saw him turn to Shadow. "Shadow," he said formally, "there's someone I need you to call. And you're not going to like it."

3. Chapter 2

Chapter 2: It All Started With A Big Bang!

Sonic's POV

The first thing I remember when I woke up that morning was the place _stank_. I had woken up as soon as I felt the sun on my face, hoping to go for an early run, and was greeted by a stench akin to rotten eggs filling my nose. _P.U.! _I thought to myself. _Who forgot to flush this morning? _It wasn't until I became a little more fully awake that I realized the smell was coming from the room next door to mine-one most often occupied by none other than Knuckles the Echidna. _Good grief_, I wondered as I walked out of my room and towards his. _What is that knucklehead up to now?_

No sooner had I knocked on the door than the Master Emerald's guardian himself came out of the room, wearing one of those masks you might wear during a bombing. I would've cracked up if I weren't too busy holding my nose. "Geez, Knucklehead," I said, nose plugged, in lieu of a proper greeting. "What did you have for dinner last night?"

Knuckles sighed. "Good morning to you too." He added, before replying, "I borrowed one of Tails' chemistry textbooks and learned how to create a solution of hydrogen sulfide mixed with methane gas. A little experiment in _pest control_, if you will." He put special emphasis on "pest control" which was... weird. Until another voice clarified me on the situation.

"It's not gonna work, Knuckles!" At this precise moment, Silver stuck his head out of the door. Silver recently discovered a set of ruins on the origins of Solaris and the Flames of Disaster and, being the history buff he is, my buddy Tails offered to work with him to decipher the language of the ruins. Only problem? Silver, through some mysterious trick of fate, ended up having to share a room with Knuckles. And if this interaction's not enough indication, they do _not _get along.

"I've been around the world, and have smelled everything from lavender to old meat to an elephant's ass!" At this, I was trying so hard not to giggle like a maniac, while also wondering where in the world Silver would've gotten THAT close to an elephant's ass-Chun-nan, maybe, or Adabat. Knuckle's face remained unreadable. "We'll just see how long you hold out." He replied. Silver merely snorted before adding, "Let's see how long your gas holds out against Blaze's lavender-scented aromatherapy candles!" It was at this rate that alarm bells started going off in my head as I turned to Knuckles. "You said hydrogen sulfide, right Knux?" I asked nervously. Knuckles looked confused. "Yes, and methane. Why?"

It was precisely at this moment, thank Chaos, that Tails arrived. "Why is my chemistry book missing and WHY does this place stink like the inside of one of Eggman's waste dumps?" He asked, clearly unamused. I ignored this question and asked another: "Tails, you're probably one of the smartest guys I know; do you know if hydrogen sulfide and methane are flammable?"

For a moment, Tails looked at me, clearly confused. "Highly, why?" he replied before quickly putting the pieces together. I immediately went in and grabbed Silver just as he was about to light a candle, while Tails grabbed Knuckles. "EVERYBODY GET OUT!" I yelled, running as fast as I could (which, if you know me, is pretty fast-not to toot my own horn) out the door. The lighter must've hit the candle at just the right angle to light it, because ten seconds later, the entire place burst into flames.

Knuckles, for his part, glared at Silver. "Nice going, ace!" He snarled, to which Tails replied, "You're the one who stole my Chemistry book! Do you even realize how hard those things are to get? I had to go all the way to the Spagonia University bookstore just to find it, and it cost me nearly 200-"

"Hey, hey, hey, settle down!" I cried out. "Yes, Knuckles should've asked you before borrowing your book, Tails, and yes, Silver was dumb to light those candles, but fighting about it isn't going to get us anywhere!" That seemed to calm everyone down for a moment. "And, hey", I continued, "look at the bright side, Tails; at least your workshop survived in one piece."

No sooner had I finished that sentence, however, than a burning piece from what I could only assume was the roof of my place fell backwards-and straight onto the roof of Tails' workshop. Almost instantly, the roof caved, and the entire workshop exploded in a massive pillar of flames and smoke. The timing of it all would've been hilarious, were it not for Tails' heartbroken facial expression. Poor Tails.

I winced and turned to Tails. "Sorry there, little bro." I said, reaching my hand out to comfort Tails. Tails, however, seemed to take no notice of me, turning towards Knuckles and Silver with rage in his blue eyes and growling out the following sentence: "You two owe me big time."

"Thanks again for letting us stay with you, Amy." I said as Amy laid out dinner-a chicken caesar salad which definitely looked delicious. The girl makes me nervous sometimes, but she's known me almost as long as Tails has and has been a loyal friend during that time, plus Cream and Vanilla lived a _long _ways away. So, naturally, I asked her to let us crash there until we could find a new place with a space big enough for Tails to use as a new workshop, and much to my surprise, not only did she say yes-to all of us-but she was hospitable and gracious about the whole ordeal. Not to mention decidedly non-creepy.

"You're welcome." Amy replied, before turning to Tails. "I haven't found anyone to rent out the basement suite; if you need it, I'd be more than happy to let you use it as a temporary workshop."

Tails' face visibly brightened up. "Thanks Amy!" he replied. Amy smiled. "My pleasure." She said, clearly glad to have cheered the fox cub up. "Now everybody dig in!" We did, and the food was as delicious as it looked. I was about halfway through mine, and was just about to put another forkful in my mouth when a muffled saxophone tune sounded-indicating that _someone _was getting a phone call.

"Aw, is Knuckie getting a phone call fwom his giwlfwriend?" I teased, knowing full well who was calling. Knuckles, red in the face, glared

at me before leaving the table to answer his phone while Amy grumbled about what could be so important that Rouge the Bat just had to call during dinner. "Rouge, can this wait? I'm having dinner with Amy." Knuckles answered. A pause. "Yeah, me, Sonic, Tails, and Silver are staying at her place because, to make a long story short, Silver and I kinda blew up ours." Pause. "Don't ask." Pause. "Probably, I mean we didn't have time to grab a whole lot of our belongings so it's possible. Why were you trying to call Sonic?" Pause. "Really? That's two names I never expected to hear in the same sentence." Pause. "Yea, hang on, I'll put him on."

Knuckles then walked over towards me, phone in hand. "It's for you." He said. "Really?" I replied. "What's going on?" Knuckles shrugged. "I don't know, but apparently Shadow wants to talk to you about something; he's been trying to call you all day." I then took the phone and held it to my ear. "Hello?"

"About time you picked up, Faker." Shadow's deep voice greeted me on the other end. I smiled. "Shadow! Long time no see, or long time no hear in this case." I replied. "What's up, old pal? You on MySpace often?"

I could hear Shadow's nostrils flare on the other end. "That stopped being funny in 2005 and you know it." He answered, sounding less than amused. "Anyways, I'm calling because G.U.N could really use your help with a case we picked up."

I chuckled, remembering the last time I had taken him up on that offer. "Shadow, I'd love to help you any time, but I'm not gonna go all the way to G.U.N headquarters just so you and Rouge can Rick Roll me again. Just send me the link and claim it's a video of you ski jumping or something-"

"THIS ISN'T A JOKE, FAKER! SOME SICKO'S RUNNING AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE BPM! THEY HACKED INTO OUR SYSTEM, THEY THREATENED ONE OF OUR AGENTS, AND THE COMMANDER, FOR WHATEVER REASON, WANTS YOUR HELP!" Shadow screamed all of this into my ear, but his voice sounded shaky. Was he crying? Either way, I knew this was serious business; Shadow was definitely a grump, but he rarely yelled like that at anyone, let alone me-and I annoyed him like crazy.

"Alright, alright, I'm sorry." I offered. "I'll be there as soon as possible." With that, I hung up and placed the phone on the table. "Thanks for dinner, Amy, but I gotta run. Duty calls!" I then sped out of there as quick as a flash and ran towards the G.U.N headquarters, ready for action.

****AN:** And so it begins... Hey guys! As you may have figured by now, I've recently gotten myself into a bit of a rut with my Guardians of Ga'Hoole stories, so I've started writing some stuff for another one of my favourite franchises: Sonic the Hedgehog! The scene in the beginning of this chapter was inspired by one from "The Big Bang Theory", the title of the story came from a Panic! At The Disco song (which, now that I've listened to it, I realize doesn't exactly fit the story), and Echo is my own character! Anyway, feel free to read and review!**

****Disclaimer:** All characters (except Echo) and locations belong to SEGA and Sonic Team**

4. Chapter 3

Chapter 3: Blue Blitz

Sonic's POV

"Sonic! Chaos, am I glad to see you!" The Commander greeted me when he saw me. This, of course, was after I had arrived in the lobby and was greeted by the slowest receptionist I've ever met. For an organization charged with protecting Mobius from threats, their customer service could definitely use some work. Not that I could tell the Commander that, because within seconds he was guiding me to his office. We then sat down at his desk, and his beady eyes bore into me. "What did Shadow tell you about the case?" He asked.

I shrugged. "Not much," I replied, "apart from that this Kaiser Fade guy heads the BPM-whatever that is-and that he hacked you guys just to threaten an agent."

The Commander sat back in his chair, pinching the bridge of his nose. "If only it was as simple as that." He sighed. He then leaned forward. "BPM is an acronym for The Brotherhood of the Purity of Mobius, and we really don't know much about them or their leader, Kaiser Fade, other than that he really seems to have it out for what he referred to as 'the developmentally impaired'. At around 19:46 military time, he hacked into our system and said that we had 30 days to discharge or euthanize Corporal Agent Echo Charter, or else..." Here the Commander shuddered, as though simply recalling the story had touched a nerve. "Or else he would kill her slowly and painfully in front of our eyes."

My eyes widened in shock. This man sounded nuts! Not to mention completely sadistic. The Commander then straightened up. "Fortunately, Agent Charter is not only one of our best agents, but is incredibly resilient, so you will be partnered with her for this case. Your mission? Find the BPM, learn their motives, and shut them down permanently. You up for the task?"

I smiled. What is this, a trick question? "Sir, with all due respect, I've taken down Eggman more times than I can count. I think I can handle these guys." The Commander glared at me. "THIS IS NOTHING LIKE DESTROYING A BUNCH OF ROBOTS!" He then sighed. "But I'm glad to hear you're willing to do this. If you'll please follow me, I'll introduce you to Agent Charter and let you two get started." As he said this last sentence, he stood up from his chair and walked towards his door. I followed close behind.

Echo Charter, huh? I thought to myself. Had a nice ring to it. She must be quite the agent. I just hope she's not as obsessed with jewels as Rouge!

Echo's POV

I surveyed the tools Damien had given to me in Weapons, feeling each and every one in my hand. Many of them were discreet, disguised as lipstick or hairspray-things a human female my age would be carrying whilst travelling. Many of them were pretty neat-alarm freezing spray, a laser blade, headphones that would enhance my hearing-but my favourite ones had to be the Sentinel Pulse Modulators, or SPMs.

Small, glassy, black hemispheres, these things were designed to go off whenever they heard someone's heartbeat. Thank Chaos none of them were live at the moment, or my racing heart would be enough to set them off.

A knock on my office door interrupted my thoughts. "Agent Charter?" A familiar voice inquired. "It's the Commander; I have someone here who wants to see you. Can we come in?"

Crap! I thought to myself. "One second!" I called out before packing up my things and arranging everything in my room back to the way it was. There-spice and span. I went towards the door to open it, and standing in front of it were the Commander and a... hedgehog. A very handsome one at that, with green eyes, sneakers, gloves, and spines in a shade of blue that reminded me of a vase I had once seen in a Shamaran marketplace once. His girlfriend, I thought to myself, sure is one lucky creature.

"Echo", The Commander began, "this is Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic, this is Corporal Agent Echo Charter." Sonic. I thought to myself. What an unusual name!

Sonic's POV

So THIS is the famous Echo Charter! I thought to myself. Not bad! She had peach spines and bangs that stopped just above her eyes, which were a lovely lilac colour. On top of it all, she wore a collared green dress bespeckled with pink flowers. All of this-coupled with the warm smile she gave us as the Commander introduced us-served to give her a very innocent look.

"Pleasure to meet you, Sonic the Hedgehog." She said, her voice welcoming. I then grabbed her hand and started shaking it. "Pleasure to meet you too, Corporal! I have to say, you look absolutely-"

I had barely finished that sentence before she pulled her hand away, holding it as if it were in pain, with a tight grimace on her face. I must've showed my confusion on my face, since she soon let go and stood straight again. "I apologize, Mr. Hedgehog-hugs, handshakes, and people touching me can be very painful for me if I'm not in my suit." She explained. I was quite shocked. Surely I couldn't have grabbed her hand that hard, right?

Before I could ask, the Commander pulled me aside, saying he needed to speak to me for a second and letting Echo know she could change into her special suit if she so desired. As soon as we had turned the corner, the Commander turned to face me. "There's something I forgot to tell you during briefing." The Commander explained. "Agent Charter was threatened by Kaiser Fade because she has a developmental disorder called autism, which affects her social development, as well as her behaviour and the way her brain interprets sensory stimuli. As a result, she tends to hear things that others cannot, and she has a very intense focus on a task she is doing. Her biological parents left her at an orphanage shortly after she was diagnosed because they simply saw her as a burden, and the orphanage where she stayed until she was five, the St. Nicholas Home for Orphans, viewed her very much the same way. She was five when she was adopted by the late Commander Jonathan Charters and his wife Ava, who saw potential in her, and Jonathan trained her and taught her how to use her brain to her advantage. 10 years later, she first joined G.U.N as a cadet, and

hasn't stopped proving her potential since." The Commander then lowered his head, as if in shame. "In fact," he added, "I had just promoted her to Corporal and put her in charge of a special task force of others like her the night we met Kaiser Fade."

Almost as quickly, the man snapped his head back up. "In any case, her autism is also why ordinary physical contact feels extremely painful to her, so she wears a special suit and gloves designed by one of our weapons specialist in order to block her touch receptors and keep her senses from overloading during missions." As if on cue, Echo appeared from behind us, although I almost didn't recognize her when I saw her. In lieu of her earlier dress, she was wearing the bodysuit and gloves the Commander had described along with matching black lace up boots. The sweet innocence in her eyes earlier seemed to have been replaced by a steely determination, and in that second, it was almost as if she had grown up in the span of two and a half minutes.

The Commander then straightened up. "Alright, well I'll let you two work out your plan for the mission." He said. "Don't forget, Echo, you and Sonic have a plane to Wolfflin this afternoon at 1400 military time, and you both have a reservation at Der Schloss, across the street from a confirmed BPM base. Good luck to you both." He then turned the corner and disappeared from sight. I turned to Echo, who was busy organizing her clothes into outfits, folding them, and placing them into a green suitcase. I felt a little awkward, given that she could've heard what the Commander had told me, and Echo must have sensed it. "In case you're curious," she said aloud, "I did hear you and the Commander's conversation, and I already know most of what he told you." She then stopped what she was doing for a moment and looked up at me. "I'm not embarrassed." She said, her warm smile from earlier returning. "If you have any questions, feel free to ask. I'll answer them as best as I can."

Feeling relieved, I cleared my throat. "Okay," I began, "so, I don't really know that much about your thought process, so I don't really know what I should ask..."

Echo chuckled. "A very normal reaction." She replied, before adding, "In addition to what the Commander has told you, my brain is better able to make sense of things when they are done in a sequential order. As a result, I tend to plan my missions well in advance, down to the moment of arrest." She then placed a gloved hand on my shoulder. "Shadow told me a lot about you-about how brave and selfless you are, but also how stubborn and impatient you can be, and how you often live by your own rules."

I chuckled. So this is why Shadow was yelling on the phone. "How'd you know I was the one he called Faker?" I joked. "That's besides the point." Echo replied. "The point is, your previous approach won't really work for this case, so as hard as I know this will be for you, you're going to have to listen to the things I say-for our sake and for the sake of those whose lives are at stake. Agreed?"

I sighed. I had never liked the idea of being told what to do, but this definitely sounded serious. Besides, the Commander had said that Echo was one of G.U.N's top agents, and so far, she was definitely living up to that promise. In the end, I compromised. "Agreed." I replied. "So what do we do now?" Echo smiled. "Well, first, we'll have to come up with our personas and our alibis. Mine is Amethyst

Berica; I was named after my eyes, I'm a history major from the United Federation who is in Wolfflin on holiday, and my hobbies include photography and writing." I was beyond impressed. Echo had clearly put a lot of thought into this; meanwhile, I was scratching the back of my head, trying to come up with something good.

Finally, I had decided on my persona. "Alright then," I cleared my throat, "my name is Atticus Antonio. I got into university on an athletic scholarship, and I came here to compete in the Wolfflin Marathon der Meister." Echo then stopped me. "So far so good," she replied, "but the Marathon der Meister is in June." _Oh crap. _I thought to myself. _I'm really not good at this_. "Alright, um..." I stammered, desperately trying to come up with something that wouldn't make me sound like an idiot. Suddenly, an idea popped into my head. "Okay, so same fake name, same fake major," I offered, "but this time, we're in Wolfflin on a romantic getaway."

This piqued Echo's interest. She leaned forward. "And how did we meet, if that's the case?" she asked. I was already prepared. "Well," I replied, "since I'm in on an athletic scholarship, I'm competing on the university's track team. Anyways, one day during practice, I notice you up on the hill above the track, taking pictures of the track team. I walk up the hill towards you and charm you with my wit, then we went for coffee, then dinner, then a movie, and then we just started... taking off."

Echo nodded. "And what's the anniversary of this meeting?" she asked. I thought for a little while, then came up with a date: "March 24th. I remember it, because it was sunny, yet there was this little patch of fog behind the hill that covered the bottom half of the university building, and it gave the place this sort of mysterious look to it." I was pretty content with my alibi... until I remembered something. "This will mean we'd have to make a fair amount of physical contact." I told her. "Are you okay with that?"

Echo nodded, causing me to breath a sigh of relief. "I'll initiate most of it; follow my lead when the time comes okay?" I gave her a thumbs up before her phone buzzed. She turned it on and looked at the screen. "Rouge says she has a file she wants us to look at; she says she's sending it to me because your phone got destroyed." She told me before handing me the phone. "I wonder how that happened..." I took a look at the phone, which contained the following message:

****Rouge:** Oh, before I forget, Echo, could you show Sonic this file for me? His phone got destroyed. It's an article on the origins of the BPM. world/the-history-of-the-bpm-1**

I clicked the link... only to hear that familiar opening riff and see that Chaos-damned redhead dancing on the phone screen. Rouge had Rickrolled me... again. Echo looked at me like she had no clue what had just happened as I sighed and placed my face in my hand. "I hate that bat so much right now."

5. Chapter 4

Chapter 4: And We're Off!

Sonic's POV

We arrived at Station Square International Airport at around 1:25 PM, or 13:25 military time. When I asked Echo why we had arrived so early, she said it was to give us extra time to go through security, but I think it's more to alleviate her own anxiety. Not that I can complain-the more relaxed she is, the better she'll be able to focus.

After we went through security, I asked to borrow Echo's phone for a moment. Echo nodded. "Just keep your ears open for when they make the boarding call." She said as she handed me the phone. I took it and punched in a number I had known for years. "Come on, bud, pick up..."

"Hello?" A familiar voice answered.

"Hey, Tails, how you doin' buddy?" I asked.

"Sonic!" Tails greeted me. "Where are you? What did Shadow want?"

I took a deep breath. "I'm at Station Square International Airport." I replied. "And it was actually the Commander that wanted something. Listen, I'll explain later; right now, I need you to pull up everything you can find of the Brotherhood for the Purity of Mobius and send it to G.U.N." Yea, I knew their Intelligence unit was already doing that, but I had more confidence in Tails than I did in them.

"Great Chaos, they must be bad news!" Tails replied. _No crap_, I thought to myself. "Don't worry, I'm on it."

I heard the boarding call and felt Echo tugging on my arm. "I knew I could count on you!" I told Tails quickly. "Alright, I gotta go; say 'hi' to Amy and Knuckles for me." I then hung up, handed the phone back to Echo, and walked towards the gate.

* * *

><p>We arrived at around 11:37 am Wolfflin time and got into a cab. "Um Der Schloss, bitte." Echo told the driver. I was beginning to feel like an idiot when the driver turned around and told me, "Your friend speaks very good Wolfflin, but it is not necessary; all hosts speak language of their guests." I breathed out a sigh of relief, and the the driver started the cab and drove us to the car.<p>

Wolfflin was... A mix of things, to say the least. On the one hand, the cobblestone streets, old buildings, and lampposts reminded me a lot of Spagonia; however, there were also glass skyscrapers and modern sculptures mixed into the city landscape. Echo, for her part, looked out the window throughout the entire trip, taking pictures of things as they passed by.

"Wolfflin is mix of old and new." The cab driver told us. "We strive to keep our history alive and well, so we preserve everything that was part of it. But at same time, we are not afraid to build new stories, yes?"

* * *

><p>We soon arrived at Der Schloss, which was a giant castle that looked like the ones out of medieval literature. Echo thanked-and

paid-the cab driver, who then drove away. We then walked into Der Schloss, and the lobby was... magnificent, I gotta say. The walls were painted red and trimmed with gold, while the carpet seemed to be made of a red, velvety material. There was a brown wooden table in the centre of the room containing a sand-coloured vase filled with roses, and there were brown leather couches along the walls. From one side, you could see an equally elegant bar and hear people chatting and laughing, and the lobby desk was made out of the same wood as the table. There was even a little bell on top of it, and the staff were dressed extremely well.<p>

We walked towards the desk, where Echo greeted the young, blond woman working there. "Hello," she said in her thick Wolfflin accent, "welcome to Der Schloss. What can I do for you today?"

"Yes, we would like to check in." Echo replied. "My name is Amethyst Berica?" The woman nodded. "Ah, yes," she replied, "let me check and see what room you are in." It was at this precise moment that the Pink Panther theme song started playing-indicating that Echo was getting a call. She picked up the phone. "Hello?"

A pause. "I'm at Der Schloss, Mom, Atticus and I just checked in. Why?" Pause. "Woah, woah, woah, slow down. What happened now?" Pause. "He _what_!?" Pause. "Get Dad to trace the message and see what time you got it." Pause. "Because he's a cop, remember?" Pause. "Alright, I'll be on the look out." Pause. "Love you too, Mom. Bye." Echo then hung up, and it was precisely at that moment that the woman handed us our room key.

"Here you are, Miss Berica," The woman declared, "Room 623. The hotel has decorated the room especially for you two lovebirds." We thanked the woman and headed towards the elevator. Once we were inside and the doors were closed, Echo turned to me. "That was Rouge." She told me. "Kaiser Fade and the BPM just went into a grocery store and murdered an autistic cashier in front of the entire store. In other words, let's hope your friend finds some information on these guys... The clock is ticking." I could feel the horror and confusion in her words, and I understood it-I couldn't understand why these people were doing this, either. I offered her my hand, and she took it and squeezed it tight.

* * *

><p>Meanwhile, back in the United Federation...<p>

Shadow's POV

I paced back and forth like a madman in my home, barely able to sleep. It wasn't even that I was worried Faker would screw things up-he was arrogant, sure, but he got the job done, every time. No, I was worried about Echo. We weren't quite able to trace the signal from Kaiser Fade's message, meaning not only did we not know where their base is, but that they could be anywhere. Hell, they could be in Wolfflin right now as we speak. What then?

Rouge then popped her head in. "I just called Echo." She told me. "Her and Sonic just arrived at Der Schloss. They had just checked in when I called." I slumped in my chair, exhausted. Rouge sat down. "Now, now, old friend," she cooed, "I know you're worried, and you have good reason to be, but Echo's a big girl, she can take care of

herself. Besides, she's got Sonic right there with her."

I snorted. "Like that is of any comfort to me right now." I replied. "Echo is definitely one of the best agents G.U.N has, but you and I both know that her thinking takes patience to understand-something we also know Faker has none of. Why couldn't they have sent me in place of him, I'm just as capable as he is of-"

Rouge placed a hand on my shoulder. "Calm down, hon." She said in her usual flirtatious manner. "Sonic may not be the most patient creature in the world, or the most humble, but he would never avoid helping those in need, and everyone with Echo's brain is certainly in need right now. Besides, from what the Commander told me, Sonic took the news pretty well." She then stood up. "Now, come on Shadow," she pleaded, "try to get some rest. We got plenty of work to do tomorrow." I was still pretty stressed, but I knew better than to argue with Rouge. Plus, she was right-G.U.N's presence would be needed tomorrow to keep the peace, as it was the start of the Multicultural Festival, and mayoral candidate Lauren Keller would be cutting the ribbon.

Most recently, Station Square's mayor, Alan Silverman, had announced he was retiring from politics, and as a result, we were now in the midst of a mayoral election that had turned into a race between Lauren Keller and Paul Lexington. Lauren Keller seemed to be the most promising candidate-she had been the chair of the Station Square school board during Mayor Silverman's term, and she seemed to have a definite plan for what she would do during hers. It was Mr. Lexington, however, who seemed to be winning the most support so far; he had raw presence and charisma, and he definitely knew how to work a crowd into a frenzy. Even so, I still couldn't understand why people in their right minds would vote for him, since he seemed to spew nothing but hate. I continued to contemplate this as I closed my eyes and my senses dissolved into black.

* * *

><p>"Mr. Lexington wishes to divide us." Lauren said into the microphone to the crowd of thousands. Various members of G.U.N-myself and Rouge included-stood on the borders of the crowd that afternoon, ready for potential disaster. "He claims he is doing this to protect the citizens of Station Square from potential threats-threats he says are coming from Chun-nan, from Mazuri, from Shamar. But when I look at everyone here today in Phoenix Plaza-people here from all corners of Mobius-I don't see potential threats, I don't see Mazruians or Holoskans or Shamarans. I see true citizens of Station Square, and it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all here to the start of our annual Multicultural Festival!" As the crowd cheered in response, Lauren cut the ribbon, and with that, officially kicked off the festival.<p>

On ordinary days, Phoenix Plaza was Station Square's main shopping district; today, however, the plaza was festooned with various decorations from around the world. Various tents had been set up with displays from around the world, some of which were even cooking food from their respective countries. The smell of pork buns wafted from Chun-nan's tent, and I could hear music playing as a group of Shamaran girls began a traditional dance. Rouge and I were stationed at Adabat's tent, and we were just about to make our way there when the gunfire started.

At first, I thought the loud, booming _bang _I had heard was thunder, despite the sky being perfectly clear. It wasn't until I heard screaming and saw mothers grabbing their children and running that I realized someone had been shot. Instinctively, Rouge and I reached for our guns and started searching for the shooter-me on the ground and Rouge in the air. More gunfire sounded-repetitive and percussive this time-with shots aimed at the Shamaran and Chun-nanan tents as their occupants fled the scene, leaving many of their cultural artifacts behind.

"We have hostages!" Rouge's voice sounded from my communicator. "Northeast quadron of the plaza, near the Wolflinnian tent!" I ran immediately in that direction and what I found... was perhaps the most horrifying things I had ever seen.

A Mazurian man, a Spagonian man, a woman, and a little girl were tied to the tentposts. Upon closer inspection, I noticed that the Spagonian man had a limb amputated and wore a suit-meaning he was most likely a veteran-and the little girl had trisomy 21-Down's syndrome. In that split second, I knew the BPM was behind this, and as I hid in an alleyway close to the tent, what I saw next confirmed my suspicions.

A group of young, pale men-all of whom looked to be from either Spagonian, Soleannan or Federation descent-walked towards the tent. They wore all white suits, with their crest-a star and shield with an eagle and two stalks of wheat on it-was emblazoned onto their sleeves. Three of them walked towards a pole of the tent, but the person who walked towards the fourth pole, the one with the little girl... was not a person at all. It was a hedgehog, with grey spines, a stocky build, and... lilac eyes! _Great Chaos,_ I thought to myself, _he looks a lot like Echo!_ A disturbing thought occurred to me-was this one of her brothers? Or worse, her father?

I didn't get the answer to my question, however, because before I knew it, a familiar form marched through the wall of soldiers: that of Kaiser Fade! "These individuals", he sneered, "are stains to the face of Purity." He then turned to the grey hedgehog, and said, "And do you know, Samuel, what must be done to stains?"

Samuel looked up at Kaiser Fade, his eyes cold and unfeeling. "They must be washed away." He said, his voice equally as lifeless. I have rarely been shaken by anything in my life, but in that moment, I felt a chill enter my entire body from my tail to the tip of my top quill. A smile went up Kaiser Fade's face-one that made me regret having such a big breakfast this morning. "Very good." He said, then signalled the soldiers at the tentposts. Almost immediately, all of them, including Isaiah, pointed their guns at the captives. Kaiser Fade then turned towards the rest of the soldiers. "Isaiah!" He called, and a wiry man came running through the wall, carrying a tripod and a video camera. He stopped just in front of the tent and set up the equipment before turning on the camera. _Good Chaos, _I thought to myself, _they're ACTUALLY recording this!?

Kaiser Fade then stepped out in front of the camera. "Hello, everyone." He said. "Kaiser Fade here. Today we have a special treat for you; we have a four for one deal, meaning you get to see not one, not two, but FOUR executions-all in one video. So many good options, so little time!" He then skipped around the tent, stopping at each

pole. "Eenie meenie meinie mo, catch a tiger by the toe, if he hollers let him go, eenie meenie meinie mo! My mother says to pick the very best one, and you are it!" My entire body shook with horror: he had chosen the little girl. "Congratulations, ding ding ding!" he cried, pointing at her. "You, my dear, are the winner!" He then turned to Samuel. "Care to do the honours?"

Samuel then aimed his gun at her chest. For a second, I thought I saw a hint of recognition in his eyes, as if he had seen something of his daughter in that little girl. If there was, however, no feeling seemed to accompany it-no love, no fear, no sorrow. _Talk about the pot-_I had thought to myself, but before I could finish it, I heard a gunshot, followed by the little girl screaming in pain. Samuel had shot her in the stomach, and proceeded to shoot her in the legs, throat, and heart before her body finally went limp. Meanwhile, I felt as if my heart had fallen out of my chest and onto the ground, and for the first time since Maria's death, I wanted to cry.

Kaiser Fade then walked away from the tent, waiving his hand dismissively and telling the other soldiers at the tent to kill the others, and I watched, helplessly, as each captive suffered the same fate.

6. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Echo's POV

After arriving at our hotel room and unpacking our stuff, Sonic and I decided to discuss our plan over lunch in the town square. I quickly got changed into a green t-shirt and jeans, then put on my favourite pink trench coat and a pair of ballet flats before accompanying Sonic, arm in arm, to a small pub near our hotel. Lunch was a meat stew called sauerbraten with white asparagus for me, and bratwurst with potatoes and bread for Sonic. Funny how I'm supposed to be the one dependent on routine, yet Sonic won't eat anything that doesn't slightly resemble a chilli dog. Oh well.

"Okay, we've gotten to the hotel and are now right across from a BPM office." I whispered, taking great care to make sure we weren't heard. "What we need now is some kind of excuse to keep tabs on the place."

Sonic simply smiled. "Well," he replied, "Amthyst enjoys photography, does she not?" I nodded. "And when her and Atticus first met, she was taking pictures of the track team." He added. "Now, why would someone take pictures of people without them knowing?"

I thought for a moment. "Well," I replied, "usually it's for an article or a scrapbook of..." Sonic's smile grew bigger as I put the pieces together.

"Alright, picture this." Sonic said, as if he was selling a new brand of sneakers. "This vacation marks a very special milestone for Amethyst and Atticus, so before we left, you decided that you would make a photo album composed of all the pictures you took during your time in Wolfflin. So, naturally, you take pictures of everything you see, and-wait for it-one of those things just so happens to be the

building where the BPM holds office, as it's a historically significant building in Wolfflin."

I nodded. Sonic clearly put more thought into his plans than it seemed. Something then occurred to me, and I whipped out my camera-an old Polaroid my mother gave to me-and snapped a photo of Sonic eating his bratwurst. PA-CHEW! Sonic, for his part jumped out of his seat. "What was that for?" He yelped. I giggled; my partner could be truly adorable sometimes.

"Well," I replied, "you can't have a photo album without photos, can you?" As I said this, the photo printed out from the camera, and I took it and shook it a few times until the image revealed itself to me. I giggled a little bit. This one was definitely a keeper.

Sonic's POV

I couldn't help but be impressed as Echo aimed her camera at the town square and snapped a picture. PA-CHEW! A flash, and then the photo came out of the camera. Echo took it and shook it a few times, giving it to me. What can I say; the girl was a natural. No sooner had she given me the photo than she aimed her camera at the inside of the pub and had snapped another picture. PA-CHEW!

I felt someone tap my shoulder, and I look up and see a female hedgehog had approached our table. She had peach spines like Echo, but hers were shorter and her bangs seemed coiffed. Her eyes were a bright green colour, and she wore an eggshell blue sleeveless dress and heels in the same hue. She reminded me of women I had seen in movies about the 50's or 60's: poised, polished, and perfectly groomed.

"Excuse me," she said, her voice making her sound exactly as she looked, before pointing to Echo, "is your friend a professional?"

"Amy?" I asked. The hedgehog nodded. "Nah, she just does it for fun. But she's pretty good at it." Almost as soon as I said it, I mentally face palmed myself. Amy? Really? It was meant to be a cute pet name for "Amethyst", but all too quickly, the image of Amy Rose herself popped into my head, as if to defend me from Echo's advances. Wait, what?

Thankfully, Echo saved me from further embarrassment. "Oh, hello ma'am." She said politely. "I hope I'm not disturbing you." The hedgehog merely chuckled. "Not at all, dear." Then something seemed to pass through her-a jolt, almost-but she just as quickly shook it off. "My name is Emily Frost," she said, "and me and my husband Samuel are part of a little-" Here she looked back and forth, as if she was frightened someone might be listening. "Club." I turned my head towards her, and Echo's ears pricked at attention. The same thought ran through our minds: The BPM! "Our photographer has recently... Well... Been discharged," Emily continued, "and we'd love to have you two on board." She then turned towards Echo, a sickly sweet smile on her face. "What's your name, dear? Amy, right?"

"Amethyst, actually." Echo replied. "Amethyst Berica." She then let out a little giggle. "'Amy' is more of a pet name Atticus here-" she

gestured to me as she said this. "-came up with. Ain't that right, Atty?" I nodded, more than willing to let Echo do the talking. Emily smiled. "Oh, what a pretty name!" She sighed, clasping her hands together beside her head. "I can see where the name comes from-you've got such lovely purple eyes." She then leaned closer, and that little jolt passed through her again. "My husband," she said quietly, "my husband has that very eye colour." My jaw dropped to the floor. _Holy Chaos_, I thought to myself, _was this Echo's mother?_ Emily, however, simply let out a little giggle. "Small world!" She said, showing no sign that she had recognized Echo in any way. "Come on, dearies; you can stay with me! My husband's in the United Federation on business, but he should be back tomorrow morning for breakfast." Not wanting to miss our chance to get deep undercover, and not wanting to know what kind of business Samuel had in the United Federation, we paid our bill and followed her out of the restaurant. As we walked towards her home, Echo leaned in and whispered, "I can't help but feel as though I once knew her."

* * *

><p>We woke up the next morning to a grand breakfast of bread rolls, margarine, deli meats, cheeses, jam, honey, and boiled eggs. Echo and I had orange juice to drink, while Emily poured herself some coffee out of a French press. "I am so glad to have you both here." She chirped as she sat down. "It's been a long time since I had company." Echo, for her part, simply nodded her head. "It's our pleasure." She replied. "Thank you for having us." Emily smiled, and was just about to take a sip of her coffee when someone knocked on the door. Emily got up to go answer it. Standing there, right at the door, was a young grey hedgehog who looked about mine and Echo's age, maybe older, with gray spines and the same bright green eyes as Emily. I figured that this was Emily's son and, quite possibly, Echo's brother.<p>

"Theodore!" Emily scolded, her tone turning icy. "Where on Mobius have you been?" Theodore wore a red and black leather jacket that reminded me of Shadow, and he carried a rolled up newspaper in his hand. He shrugged. "I told you," he replied nonchalantly, "I was staying with a friend last night." He then gestured towards me and Echo. "Who are they?"

"These," she replied, her voice sickly sweet once again, "are our guests, Amethyst and Atticus. They're going to apply for the photographer job once your father gets home." "I see." Theodore replied, before slamming the newspaper down on the table. "Well, if this doesn't make you reconsider, I don't know what will." He then walked away, his mother chiding him. I, however, paid no attention to their bickering as I read the headline:

****MULTIKULTURELL MASSACRE BLÄ„TTER 20 TOTE, 35
VERLETZTE.****

Naturally, of course, I couldn't read Wolfflin, but I could understand the words "Multikulturell Massacre". I then remembered something I wish I didn't: Station Square was having it's Multicultural Festival this week. I turned to Echo. "The BPM..." I whispered.

Echo nodded, reading the paper aloud in perfect English: "Station Square's 9th annual Multicultural Festival kicked off in a grim

fashion when a group of young men in their 20's opened fire into the crowd and killed 20, with 35 more currently in Station Square's Hospital, 18 of which have suffered critical injuries. Among the 20 dead are 9 year old Alicia Barnes, who was separated from her mother during the initial gunfire, 36 year old Lyonel Bush, 94 year old Spagonian war veteran Peter Green, and 39 year old mother of two Silvia Patterson. All of the victims were either crippled, of a different ethnic origin, female, or somehow disabled; Barnes was previously identified to have Down's syndrome. The killers claim themselves to be a member of the cult known as the Brotherhood for the Purity of Mobius, and shortly after the incident, a video was uploaded by the group portraying Barnes, Bush, Green, and Patterson being shot by four of it's members. Both mayoral candidates Lauren Keller and Paul Lexington have expressed their condolences for the victim's families, and Keller has condemned the shooting as a senseless attack."

We were suddenly interrupted by the sound of a door closing, and looked up to see a gray hedgehog with lilac eyes just like Echo's. Emily walked towards him, smiling. "Ah, Samuel, you're home." She chirped. "I'd like you to meet Amethyst Berica and Atticus Antonio."

7. Chapter 6

****A/N: Previously on "From A New Perspective"...****

****Sonic and Echo took off to Wolfflin to find the secret of stopping the BPM once and for all, only to unwittingly meet Echo's biological mother and infiltrate it's ranks! Meanwhile, the Multicultural Festival kicked off to a grim start in Station Square, as the BPM open fired on the crowd and Shadow witnessed Echo's biological father take part in a particularly gruesome killing! Will Sonic and Echo complete their mission without blowing their cover? How's Shadow coping with what he saw? And where are Tails and the others throughout all of this? Keep reading to find out!****

****Disclaimer: Only Echo, her family, Kaiser Fade, the BPM, and Wolfflin are my own. The rest belongs to SEGA and Sonic Team.****

Chapter 6

Sonic's POV

"I'd like you to meet Amethyst Berica and Atticus Antonio."

I looked around me at Samuel, then Emily, then Theodore, then Echo. There's no way, I thought to myself, Echo could possibly be related to THESE lunatics. Yet what I saw before me had no other explanation; Theodore had the same gray spines and stocky build as Samuel, and, save for her lilac eyes and pink trench coat, Echo seemed to be a carbon copy of Emily. How these people could've possibly created someone as smart and as kind as Echo, however, was beyond me.

Samuel, for his part, eyed us suspiciously. He then turned to Emily, his expression unreadable even to me. "Emily," he said, his voice almost weary, "what did I tell you about inviting strangers into our

home."

"I know, I know," Emily replied, with what I could've sworn was a reconciliatory tone, "but they struck me as the perfect candidates. Amethyst, in particular, looks like she has potential to be a great photography."

Samuel simply sniffed. "I'll be the judge of that." He said dismissively. He then motioned Echo forward, and Echo got up from her chair and walked towards him. If she felt any fear, she certainly didn't show it.

"So you're a photographer, are you?" Samuel said, his tone condescending. I wanted to punch him in the jaw, but Echo held her repose. "Yes sir." She replied, standing at perfect attention. "It's more or less a hobby of mine; I'm currently majoring in history at the moment."

"I see." Samuel replied. "And where exactly are you majoring in history, might I ask?"

Without flinching, Echo answered. "Marble Hills University, Station Square Campus, sir." Upon hearing this, Samuel cocked his head. _Uh oh. _I thought. "So you're from the United Federation, are you?" Samuel said, not indicating his feelings on the matter. Echo nodded. "So what brings you to Wolfflin, then?"

If this were a movie I was watching with the boys, I would've been biting my nails nervously; of course, this wasn't a movie, so I could do no such thing. Fortunately, Echo spared me from becoming a nervous wreck. "Atticus and I came here for a romantic getaway, sir." She replied. "I had always been fascinated with Wolfflin, so Atticus, being the romantic that he is, booked tickets and a hotel for just the two of us for a week and took me by surprise on my birthday." Theodore, of course, chose to respond with a wolf whistle and a yell of "Yea, go get 'em, Atticus!" to which Emily responded by shushing him. If anyone had seen me blush in that moment, thank Chaos no one pointed it out.

Samuel, for his part, seemed satisfied. "In that case, pack your bags you two." He replied. "We have a train to Desreumaux after lunch." He must've seen the confused look on my face, for he soon added, "We had received intel that we were being followed, so we had to burn our office here in Wolfflin and relocate." The same thought seemed to pass through me and Echo's minds: _Oh shit! _Not that it mattered, however-Echo and I were both deep undercover, so we would still be able to go about our mission. We would just have to be more careful. Samuel then turned towards Theodore. "Why don't you take these two out for some sightseeing?" He said, a sick grin forming on his face. "Your mum and I have some catching up to do." At that moment, whatever colour there might have been seemed to have drained from his face, and he soon pulled us both by the arm, as though he was in a hurry to leave

Echo, Theodore, and I toured the city of Wolfflin as quickly as possible. We visited the Kathedrale von St. Giles, Die Wolfflin Museum Fur Kunst, and their famous Alt Wald Park, which actually housed not a forest, but various sculptures from Wolfflin artists. While visiting Alt Wald Park, Theodore bought us their famous speiseeis and we sat down, speiseeis in hand. "Please don't tell me

you guys are actually considering joining my parents?" He said at last. Echo and I exchanged a look, and I turned to him. "How do we know you won't tell them if we're not?" I replied.

Theodore looked at me, and I could feasibly see pain in his eyes. He must've seen a lot of things no youth should see. "Trust me," he replied, "I want nothing to do with them. My father has tried to control everyone in this house; he's raped Mom, they abandoned my baby sister simply because she had autism-

I suddenly became interested. "You had a sister?" I asked. Theodore nodded. "Her name was Aurora Lavender Frost." He replied. "The middle name was my mom's idea, but the first one was mine. The BPM, they've been around for quite awhile, and when my parents joined, they were led by this guy called Kaiser Jab. That's the thing, see, the leader of the group, his title always starts with Kaiser-why, I don't know. Anyway, I hated everyone involved, so when my sister was born, I saw her as this little bit of light that would make my life a little brighter, and I remembered my grandmother, Chaos rest her soul, showing me a picture of the Aurora Borealis when I looked into her eyes."

"The Northern Lights." Echo said dreamily. Theodore nodded. "Anyways, so then two years later, my dad notices something wrong with Aurora. She was walking perfectly fine, and she could talk, but she could only repeat what me or Mom or Dad said; she didn't even know the meaning behind any of it. So they took her to the clinic, and she got diagnosed with autism. Now, the BPM, they'll kill anyone that isn't a white, straight, married individual from the United Federation, Spagonia, Wolfflin, Desreumaux, or Soleanna, but they especially hate people with autism or any way of thinking that doesn't fit with their ideals. So, naturally, I knew she was in trouble and I tried to hide her from my parents and from anyone who came to the house. What I didn't know was that my dad had originally planned to kill her, and it was only after my mom agreed to blow him the next night that he agreed that he would instead abandon her at an orphanage. So that night, my dad came into my room, grabbed her from my closet, and drove off. When he came back, Aurora wasn't with him, and whenever I asked him when she was coming back, he just gave me this... look, as if I was a traitor purely for asking that question. So I can assure you, I wouldn't dare report you guys to my parents-or anyone, for that matter."

I breathed a silent sigh of relief. "Very well, then." I replied, before leaning in and lowering my voice to a whisper. "We're actually here from G.U.N, and our mission is to stop the BPM."

"You're Sonic the Hedgehog, aren't you?" Theodore asked. I nodded. "I knew it." He smirked. "Atticus Antonio has to be the worst fake name I've ever heard-and I've both heard and used plenty." He then looked at Echo. "Who's this?" He asked.

Echo stuck out her hand. "Corporal Agent Echo Charter of G.U.N." She replied. "It's a pleasure to meet you."

Theodore smiled. "Pleasure meeting you." He answered. "You remind me a lot of Aurora."

I was just about to reply that she was Aurora, when a high-pitched voice interrupted my thoughts. "SONIIIIIIIC!" Oh crap. I thought to

myself as none other than Amy Rose made her way towards us. "Is she dangerous?" Theodore whispered, leaning in.

"Only if you get on her bad side." A voice I recognized as Knuckles replied. "And believe me, you do not wanna meet the business end of her Piko Piko Hammer when _that _happens."

"Well, I'll be." I chuckled. "I know Amy's just being, well, Amy, but what brings you here Knux?"

"Actually," Amy replied, "coming here was Tails' idea. Although I _do _think this would make a very romantic vacation spot, don't you, Sonikku?" This was met with a giggle from Echo, which immediately caught Amy's attention. "Who in Chaos is she?"

I gestured towards Echo. "This," I replied, "is my partner, Echo. Although if anyone asks, her name's Amethyst and she's my girlfriend." Amy opened her mouth to protest, but a look from Knuckles convinced her otherwise. Not long afterwards, Shadow skated in on his rocket shoes, followed in the air by Rouge and Tails himself.

"Well, look who decided to join the party!" I joked. Shadow, however, ignored me and went straight to Echo. "Are you alright?" He asked, to which Echo replied, "I'm fine, Shadow, take it easy." Rouge and Tails then landed in front of me. "Tails sent us some surprising information about the BPM." She replied. "However, we thought it would be best if we came here and told you personally."

8. Breaking News

****WE INTERRUPT THIS STORY TO BRING YOU THIS BREAKING NEWS UPDATE FROM STSQ CHANNEL 4! NOW, LIVE FROM THE NEWSROOM, IT'S DEAN STERLING AND SUZANNE RICKENBACHER!****

(A man in his thirties with black hair and wearing a navy suit with a black tie is sitting at a news desk next to a woman in her thirties with red hair wearing a powder blue blouse, a black blazer, and black suit pants)

Dean: Good evening, and welcome to the six o' clock news, live from Station Square! I'm Dean Sterling, this is Suzanne Rickenbacher, and here's what's happening in your world today.

Suzanne: Our top story tonight, citizens of Station Square are gripped with fear as the cult known as the Brotherhood for the Purity of Mobius strikes again in the Soleannan district's Solar Plaza. Out of respect for the family, the victim's name will not be released to the public, but a family doctor has confirmed that the individual had Asperger's, and sources close to the family have reported that he had just started living in the apartment a week before he was slaughtered.

(As Suzanne says this, a video pops up onto the screen showing a group of paramedics wheeling a man implied to be the victim on a stretcher out of an apartment building.)

Suzanne: City officials have yet to comment on the murder, but mayoral candidate Paul Lexington has made a statement following the

attack.

(A video pops up of Paul on a podium in front of the Station Square train station. He is a middle aged man with black hair wearing a navy blue suit.)

Paul: My heart goes out to the victims of these senseless attacks, as well as their families; that having been said, I would like us to take this opportunity to learn from our mistakes. From now on, this train station will be guarded by security personnel and fitted with screening devices of the highest order; during this time, we would like everyone to stay safe and on their guard; anyone could be a member of this organization, and anyone with a developmental disability will be especially vulnerable to their tactics.

(Video cuts back to Suzanne and Dean at the news desk)

Suzanne: In other news, however, Lexington has recently come under fire after a group of his supporters attacked a peaceful protest of his campaign led by Station Square native and international singing sensation Tabitha Fox.

(Video shows Tabitha, a tan fox with brown eyes jet black hair cut in a bob, leading a group of people holding signs saying slogans such as "Station Square is Open to All", "Hate Causes Meltdowns", and "Diversity is better than Purity". Tabitha is wearing a grey halter top, a black leather jacket and fingerless gloves, grey flats, and blue jeans with a white scarf for a belt. Booing can be heard as the camera pans to a young blond woman.)

Woman: What do you think you know? Go back to the home!

(At this, camera cuts to another woman, who is holding a sign.)

Woman: This affects me just as much as it does you!

(Camera then cuts to Tabitha, who is being interviewed by the news channel.)

Tabitha: I've grown up in Station Square my entire life. The people I've known during that time all come from different backgrounds, have different ways of seeing the world-but all of them have contributed to the fabric of life here. The Station Square Paul Lexington's creating is not the Station Square I know and love. If we are going to survive these attacks, we have to band together to protect those who are vulnerable; if we turn against those who are different from us, we may as well surrender to these terrorists.

9. Chapter 7

****We now return to our regularly scheduled story, already in progress...****

Chapter 7

Echo's POV

I slept deeply my first night in Desremaux. At least, as deeply as I

could, as that night was also the night I was haunted by a familiar dream.

I was running through a field. It was dark, and there were no signs of stars anywhere. My first instinct was to go into a building for shelter, as I had a feeling it would rain, when I saw a familiar building. _The orphanage! _I thought to myself. I sometimes wondered what had become of the people there-the Headmistress, the other kids, Sister Annette. The orphanage still looked like it was occupied and well maintained, and I was about to walk up and knock on the door when I heard the sound of a car pulling up. This was a departure from the normal course of this dream, and I soon got the feeling something was wrong.

I retreated and hid behind a nearby cherry tree, where I watched as a now familiar set of grey quills poked it's head out of the car. _Samuel! _I thought. _What is he doing here?_ I watched as he moved to the passenger door behind him, opened it, and took out what I thought was a gift. Upon closer inspection, however, I realized it wasn't-it was a small hedgehog, who looked no more than two, with peach spines, lilac eyes... Just like me. That could only mean... I froze. _Theodore was my brother! _I realized. _Emily and Samuel were my parents. _With that came another realization: _This isn't a dream, it's a memory. I'm seeing a memory. _

Samuel put my tiny, two-year-old self on the front step of the orphanage. I then watched, frozen with shock, as Samuel rang the doorbell and then walked back towards the car, not even looking in my direction. _My name was Aurora Lavender Frost._ _Emily and Samuel were my parents. _I realized, feeling a previously unknown bitterness well up inside me. _But to them, I was just a burden, and they abandoned me._

One of the sisters then opened the door and looked at me. "Well, hello there!" She cooed. "And what's your name?" Naturally, I simply parroted these words back to her-same pitch, same tone, same volume. The sister looked rather puzzled, but nevertheless smiled. "Nevermind that." She replied. "Let's just get you inside before you catch your death." At this, she bent down to pick me up, and as her hands came onto my hips, I could hear my two year old self screaming in that familiar pain. _Stop! _I wanted to cry out. _Can't you see this is hurting her? _But no one heard me, and soon the door to the orphanage closed.

I woke up in a cold sweat. All the memories soon came flooding in, memories I thought I had long since forgotten: meeting everyone at the orphanage, sneaking into the Headmistress' office, finding out about my autism diagnosis, all the times I was hid away from the other families... I could feel them all crowding my brain, settling into every nook and cranny. I looked at Sonic, sleeping peacefully in his bed, and wondered, silently, whether he knew the feelings I was experiencing. _Did you have a family? _I wondered. _A mother? A father? Did they love you? Do you miss them? Do you wonder where they are?_

The memory crowding soon became too much for me to handle. The walls of the hotel felt like they were closing in on me. I looked out the window; there was someone playing the cello in the plaza below me. The sound was soothing-but too far away for my liking. _I gotta get outta here. _I realized. _I gotta get out of this room and into that

plaza-sensory overload be damned. _I soon leaped out of bed and ran out the door, tears running down my face, my only thought being, _Why?_

Sonic's POV

I woke up to the sound of a door opening. I heard footsteps getting quieter as the runner ran down the halls, then I turned to the bed beside me-only to find it empty. _Echo! _I realized in a panic. _She's gone!_ I immediately ran out the open door, worried that some BPM member had discovered who she was and had captured her. I followed the sound of the footsteps out the hotel and into a plaza nearby... only to realize it was Echo herself, barefoot, still in her magenta nightgown. She stood still, simply watching the cello player nearby, and I was relieved... until she turned around, her eyes puffy and red. _Great Chaos, _I thought to myself, _had she been crying._

"Oh, Sonic, hey." She said weakly. "I'm sorry I woke you up." I rushed over to her. "I don't care about that, I'm just glad you're okay." I told her. "Come on, let's come back inside and you can tell me what happened." I was about to run back to the hotel when I noticed that Echo hadn't followed me. Instead, she had moved towards a nearby cherry tree and had plucked one of it's blossoms. She then walked towards me. "Take off your gloves, open your hand, and close your eyes." She instructed. I did as I was told, and I soon felt Echo placing the soft petals of the cherry blossom in my hand. She then gently placed the fingers of my other hand onto the petals. "Now," she instructed, "rub the petals with your fingers." I did as I was told, and the feeling was almost indescribable; the petals felt like silk.

"There's a reason I came out here." She told me. "Whenever I was upset as I child, my father, Jonathan Charter, took me outside and told me to close my eyes and focus on my other senses. I did just that, and I felt as though I had stepped into an oasis; I could hear birds chirping in the trees and feel the winds flowing through my spines. He then put a flower in my hand and told me to rub my fingers against the petals, and the moment I did that, I felt much calmer." She then looked out towards the water. "I can imagine you've seen so much of the world," she continued, "but there's more to life than just seeing things; you have to hear them, smell them, taste them, _feel _them." She then looked at me. "And sometimes, to do that, you have to stand still for a while."

I looked at Echo for a moment. She looked about the same age as me, and yet her eyes held the light and wisdom of someone much, much older. I had been to so many places, but could barely remember any of them; meanwhile, Echo remembered the taste of fresh octopus in Apotos, and could still sometimes feel the mists of the falls of Chun-nan. Our first night in Wolfflin, she had told me how, during a mission in Adabat, a yellow butterfly had landed on her nose, and she had noticed the transparency of it's wings when the light hit it from a certain angle; meanwhile, I couldn't even remember what day it was when I had first met Tails. I was astounded; perhaps I had been missing something that she had gotten a long time ago.

I need another story,

Something to get off my chest.

_My life is kinda boring, _

_Need something that I can confess _

The cello player was now playing something different. Echo smiled. "Sonic," she asked, tilting her head, "have you ever danced with a girl before?" I shook my head. "Not even with Amy?" She replied. I chuckled. "You know that Amy's not actually my-" Before I could finish, however, Echo had moved in closer.

_Till all my sleeves are stained red, _

_From all the truth that I've said. _

_Come by it honestly, I swear, _

_Thought you saw me wink, no _

_I've been on the brink, so _

"It's not that hard." Echo said with a giggle. "You just have to put your arms around your partner, like this..." As she said this, she moved my hands to her waist, while putting hers around my neck. Normally, I would've run like the dickens by now, but this time... I wanted to stay. "And then," Echo said quietly, "You just sway."

_Tell me what you want to hear _

_Something that'll light those ears _

_Sick of all the insincere _

_So I'm gonna give all my secrets away _

Echo soon started stepping backwards, and I stepped towards her, as if this was a rhythm we had been in our entire lives. I then extended one hand out to the side, like I had seen in various movies, and Echo took it, smiling. "Kinda fun, isn't it?" She giggled. I only nodded, too dumbstruck to answer.

_This time, don't need another perfect lie _

_Don't care if critics ever jump in line _

_I'm gonna give all my secrets away. _

I looked into her lilac eyes-eyes that were once weighed down by sorrow, but now seemed to be shining with hope. Suddenly, something occurred to me: If I didn't act now, and if we were successful in our mission, I would never see her again, never hear her silvery voice. This knowledge made me feel as though someone had tied my heart to a rock and thrown it in the ocean; I liked hearing her voice speak Wolfflin, I liked listening to her laugh, I liked how her eyes lit up when she was talking about iguanas or recalling a memory that brought her joy. I truly, genuinely _liked _her.

_Oh, got no reason, got no shame, _

Got no family I can blame

Just don't let me disappear

I'ma tell you everything

"Echo," I began, "these past few days, you've showed me things in... In a way I had never seen them before. And I enjoyed it-I've enjoyed meeting you and seeing things through your eyes and... When this is all over, I... I'm gonna miss you."

Echo nodded. "I'm gonna miss you, too." She replied. She then rested her head onto my chest as we continued rocking back and forth.

So tell me what you want to hear

Something that'll light those ears

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

This time, don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

So tell me what you want to hear

Something that'll light those ears

Sick of all the insincere

So I'm gonna give all my secrets away

This time, don't need another perfect lie

Don't care if critics ever jump in line

I'm gonna give all my secrets away

After we had danced for some time, I felt Echo growing tired and gently guided her back to the hotel. Once we got back to our room, I lay her down on the bed. _She looks quite beautiful asleep, _I thought to myself as I tucked her in and, without even thinking, gently kissed her on the forehead.

All my secrets away

All my secrets away

Emily's POV

Being unable to sleep, I had decided to look through some old family albums. There was a photo of me and Samuel at our wedding day, us at the hospital after I had given birth to Theodore, us with Theodore at the park, us after the birth of...

I stopped. It was the only picture in the album in which Samuel

hadn't cut her out. There we were, smiling and happy, while Aurora lay fast asleep in our arms. I then thought back to Amethyst, the girl I had considered for our photographer. I thought she had looked extremely familiar then, almost like...

_No! It can't be! _I thought to myself. Had our little girl returned to us at last?

****Disclaimer:** Echo, her family, and the BPM are mine, as are Wolfflin and Desremaux; the song belongs to OneRepublic. The rest belongs to SEGA and Sonic Team.******

End
file.